

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Clinical Impacts at the Rappahannock Area Health District as Staff Member Tests Positive for COVID-19**

(Fredericksburg, Va.) – The Virginia Department of Health’s Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) is announcing a temporary reduction in clinical services due to a health district staff member testing positive for COVID-19. RAHD has offices in Caroline, King George, Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, and Stafford. Several other staff members have been tested for the virus, and results are pending. RAHD is currently undergoing a case investigation to identify all staff members and patients who may have been exposed, and the RAHD team is reaching out to these individuals directly to provide guidance.

“The mission of RAHD is to protect and promote health and well-being in the communities we serve, and this includes the health of our staff and patients,” said Acting Health District Director Dr. Donald Stern. “Due to the novel nature of the virus that causes COVID-19, few people have developed immunity, and therefore we have seen that it can spread very easily, including by those who are not showing symptoms. Even though our area has entered Phase 1 of the reopening process, COVID-19 is still actively spreading in our community. It remains of the utmost importance that everyone follow public health precautions to prevent the spread of this virus.”

Staff who may have been exposed have been required to quarantine for two weeks. Due to the anticipated staffing impacts, RAHD will not be offering in-person clinical services from May 19, 2020 to May 28, 2020. Deep cleaning is taking place at the impacted health departments within the next 24 hours.

Clinical services including maternity care, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and family planning services will be delivered via telemedicine where possible, and patients will be referred to appropriate community partners or neighboring health districts as necessary. WIC services will continue to be available over the phone. Vital records requests and environmental health services will continue to be available.

To lower the risk of spreading respiratory infections, including COVID-19, the Virginia Department of Health urges everyone to:

- Stay at home if you are sick or experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19
- Practice social distancing. Maintain at least six feet of space between yourself and other individuals when out in public
- Wear a mask or cloth face covering to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets to others
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid contact with sick people
- If you are experiencing symptoms, call your doctor

Patients with questions or concerns are encouraged to call the RAHD COVID-19 call center at 540-899-4797.

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